

issues - foreign policy

Foreign Policy

Support for An Active Foreign Policy and Protection of Human Rights

During the 109th Congress, Representative Slaughter will continue to stress the importance of United States involvement in geographically and strategically important areas of the world. In her role as a member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, she has emphasized strong protections for human rights. Representative Slaughter continues to believe that, as the world's single indispensable country, the United States must remain visible and project an image as a role model for other nations to follow.

Holocaust Restitution

Rep. Slaughter is deeply concerned that many Holocaust survivors have been denied the reparations they deserve for the physical pain and mental suffering they endured during the Holocaust. Time is running out for Germany to provide some measure of justice to Holocaust survivors. Most are in their 70's and 80's. Ten to 15 percent of Holocaust survivors die each year.

Introduced the Justice for Holocaust Survivors Act, a bill that would have allowed survivors to pursue reparations from Germany for the unspeakable suffering they endured during the Holocaust. The bill garnered the support of 96 bipartisan co-sponsors and served as a major catalyst in the talks between the U.S. and Germany leading up to the compensation agreement agreed to on July 17, 2000. The U.S.-German agreement established the German Foundation, "Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future," as the exclusive forum for the resolution of all Holocaust-era personal injury, property loss, and damage claims against German banks, insurers, and companies.

Successfully offered an amendment to the State Department authorization bill to address the lack of oversight of the German Foundation. The amendment requires the Secretary of State to report to Congress on whether the German Foundation is meeting its responsibilities to claimants; whether insurance companies joining the agreement abide by the same baseline set of standards; and whether slave and forced labor payments are being distributed as soon as possible. The amendment also expresses the Sense of Congress regarding the urgency of payments to Holocaust slave and forced labor camp survivors and encourages the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims to work with the Secretary of State in gathering the information required for the report.

Sponsored three amendments on Holocaust survivor restitution during the tenth annual meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly held in Paris. The Holocaust survivor restitution amendments, which received almost unanimous support, were included in the Parliamentary Assembly's final declaration. The amendments urged OSCE member States to ensure that they have taken action to implement legislation to secure compensation or restitution for property loss by victims of Nazi persecution and communal organizations during the Nazi era. The OSCE final declaration is available at http://www.osce.org/pa/annual_session/

Women

Globally, from living standards to political representation, to healthcare, to reproductive rights, women are struggling to improve their quality of life. Rep. Slaughter has worked tirelessly to ensure that the Congress do what it can to improve the lives of women worldwide.

Authored two Congressional resolutions to condemn to the trafficking of women around the world. One focuses on this problem globally and directs the Departments of Justice and State to continue and increase their efforts to address the trafficking of women into the United States. The second, which deals specifically with the relocation of Burmese girls into Thailand for their induction into the commercial sex trade, calls on the United States Government to review donations to and funding of certain Thai government programs which may be aiding sex trafficking.

Joined colleagues in offering an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2002 Foreign Operations spending bill to make funds available for urgent human rights initiatives for which Congress has already authorized funding in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. Rep. Slaughter was proud to be a lead cosponsor of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. This important new law represents a comprehensive effort to address the growing problem of trafficking in human beings, particularly women and children, into forced prostitution and other forms of slavery. Rep. Slaughter's congressional record statement is available at <http://www.house.gov/slaughter/2001news/traffickingcongres.htm>, while a summary of the amendment is at <http://www.house.gov/slaughter/leg-record/hamdt224.htm>

Urged the President to make the treatment of ethnic Chinese central to the Administration's policy toward Indonesia following credible reports that at least 168 ethnic Chinese women and girls were raped during riots in Jakarta.

Expressed concern with continued human rights violations against women in Afghanistan and emphasized the need for a peaceful political settlement in that nation. Rep. Slaughter has sponsored amendments on the religious persecution of non-Muslims by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban has ordered Hindus and other non-Muslims to wear a yellow identity symbol on their clothing. The order also directs Hindu women, like their Muslim counterparts, to fully cover themselves in a veil, mandates Hindu homes to be identified as Hindu, and prohibits Hindus and Muslims from living together. Rep. Slaughter's amendment citing the OSCE participating States' commitment to counter violations of religious freedom and foster mutual tolerance between different communities was included in the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly's final declaration.

Requested that the Secretary of State take strong action on a resolution appointing a Special Rapporteur on Algeria at the United Nations in response to a State Department report documenting brutal massacres, systematic rape, and other sexual violence against women in Algeria.

Africa

Africa traditionally ranks as the poorest continent. Many nations in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan countries, face immense challenges as they attempt to meet even the most basic needs of their people. An additional hindrance is the political upheaval which frequently marks life in these countries. Rep. Slaughter has supported measures which promote democracy, and improve health and living standards in African nations.

Cosponsored the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act. This law now declares it to be U.S. policy to support the governments of sub-Saharan African countries, U.S. and African non-governmental organizations, universities, businesses, and international agencies to help ensure the availability of basic nutrition and economic opportunities for sub-Saharan individuals, through sustainable agricultural and rural development.

Supported legislation to implement policies and sanctions designed to help the Nigerian people build democracy and increase the rule of law within their society.

Voiced concern over the ongoing conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and called for a peaceful resolution to this situation.

Cosponsored the Clean Diamonds Act, a bill to prohibit the importation of diamonds unless the countries exporting the diamonds into the United States have in place a system of controls on rough diamonds. The bill aims to sever the funding of those who continue to fight for control of diamond mines in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone. Proceeds from the sales of rough diamonds in those countries continue to fuel bloody ethnic conflicts.

Balkns

Perhaps the most difficult conflicts for the United States to contend with have been the civil war in Bosnia and violence against ethnic Albanians in Kosova. Representative Slaughter has consistently pressed for a more active role for the international community in these conflicts in order to reach a speedier, just resolution for all involved. Throughout this

time, she has continued to push for the use of international law to adjudicate war crimes trials.

Traveled to Bosnia as a representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation to see firsthand the continued effects of years of violence and to observe the progress made by the Bosnian people in their efforts to rebuild.

Supported a resolution to restrict foreign aid to any country that does not comply with the requirements of the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Cosponsored a resolution calling for NATO to take direct and decisive action against those forces attacking civilian populations in Kosova.

Urged the President to take firm action to bring about an end to the campaign of ethnic cleansing in Kosova.

Children

If any group besides women find themselves in a position of disadvantage throughout the world, it is children. In many countries children face malnutrition, poverty, and abuse; are subject to the conditions of war; and are frequently forced into labor early in life, often in harrowing conditions.

Supported legislation to reallocate existing funds within the foreign assistance budget to reduce child death rates, provide for access to basic education, clean water, safe sanitation, and family planning information and services.

Called on former Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Duma Speaker Gennadi Seleznev to reconsider a proposed bill which would have prevented further American adoptions of children in Russian orphanages.

Cosponsored the Humanitarian Exports Leading to Peace Act (HELP). Reports have indicated that the sanctions regime against Iraq has contributed to the increased deterioration of Iraq's water supply and sanitation systems, which have had profound effects on children's health. The HELP Act would lift the sanctions against Iraq with regard to any food or other agricultural products, as well as medicines and medical supplies. The measure would not adjust the military sanctions that are in place, which Rep. Slaughter has strongly supported since their implementation.

Greece

For many years the United States has enjoyed a close relationship with Greece. Many Americans can trace their heritage to Greece. Rep. Slaughter has, throughout her tenure in Congress, supported measures meant to strengthen our ties with Greece.

Human Rights

Fifty years after the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, codified the elemental rights that all humans enjoy, the world remains full of reminders that this document's fundamental promise has not been realized. From Latin America to Asia, non-democratic and, sometimes, democratic governments deny these most basic rights to their citizens. Over the years, the United States government and our society have grappled with this issue and how to apply it to our foreign policy. Rep. Slaughter believes emphatically that we must hold all the nations of the world to basic standards of decency and justice in the treatment of their own people.

Assisted in numerous efforts to close the U.S. Army School of the Americas. The School has for years trained Latin Americans in guerilla warfare, teaching them skills like assassination, sabotage and propaganda to take or maintain control. The School did not promote use of democratic means to gain influence. The Fiscal Year 2001 Defense Department bill included provisions to rewrite the charter and mission of the School of the Americas, replacing it with an institution known as the "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation." However, most of the School's critics charged that this was no more than a cosmetic change that will have little impact on the School's poor record of graduating individuals who go on to commit human rights violations. Rep. Slaughter is a cosponsor of legislation to close the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.

Requested that the Secretary of State address the situation in Chiapas, Mexico by: 1) Taking effective measures to ensure that U.S. assistance does not contribute to these violations; 2) Commending the Government of Mexico for inviting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit this region; and 3) Encouraging the Government of Mexico and the Zapatistas to take appropriate steps to reach a peaceful resolution.

Called on the government of Indonesia to improve its human rights record or face military sanctions.

Cosponsored the Human Rights Information Act, which would require U.S. government agencies to review for declassification all documents regarding human rights in Honduras and Guatemala.

Supported the Torture Victims Protection Act, a law which implements the provisions of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment relating to foreign and domestic assistance for torture victims and torture victim treatment centers.

Urged the United States to pursue the unconditional release of Ngodrup Phuntsong and other prisoners of conscience in China and Tibet.

Voiced concern about the serious limitations on human rights and civil liberties in Belarus, including lack of compliance with commitments to the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Alerted the Secretary of State of possible human rights abuses committed by Syria against the Lebanese people.

Cosponsored resolution condemning the order by the Taliban regime of Afghanistan to require Hindus to wear symbols identifying them as Hindu.

Cosponsored a resolution calling on China to end its persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. The legislation expresses the sense of Congress that the United States government should urge China to release from detention all Falun Gong practitioners and put an end to their "torture and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment." 253 members of the Falun Gong movement are thought to have died from torture in China, and tens of thousands have been tortured while confined in labor camps, prisons and mental hospitals.

Ireland

For centuries the Irish have been in conflict with England for their right to self-determination. Over the years, the United States has supported efforts to peacefully solve the problems that continue to exist in Northern Ireland. In 1998, a historic peace accord was reached that includes political and administrative arrangements aimed to satisfy both sides of the debate. Representative Slaughter was encouraged by this move and continues to believe that a solution to the problems of Northern Ireland can be found without resorting to force.

Supported legislation to require that certain entities receiving US funds from the International Fund for Ireland comply with the MacBride Principles. Also, a bill to create a free trade zone in the Northern Ireland border region which will promote economic growth and greater stabilization in the region.

Honored victims of the Great Irish Potato Famine and the emigrants who rose from the tragedy of the famine to make profound contributions to America, and supported efforts to issue a postage stamp marking the 150th Anniversary of this tragic event.

Opposed proposed amendments by the Securities and Exchange Commission which would have hindered long-standing efforts to achieve economic justice in Northern Ireland through adherence to the MacBride principles.

Middle East

The Middle East is historically one of the most volatile regions on earth. The United States has long enjoyed a special relationship with Israel, lending it considerable support since its founding. While it has supported Israel, the U.S. has also intervene frequently to help find a peaceful solution to the ongoing conflicts that are both internal and external to Israel. Representative Slaughter has staunchly supported Israel's existence. She hopes for a just resolution to the problems which pervade the region.

Cosponsored legislation expressing that: (1) the United States must promote an end to the exclusion of Israel from any of the United Nations regional blocs, including rotating membership on the UN Security Council; and (2) the U.S. Ambassador to the UN should take all steps necessary to ensure Israel's acceptance in the Western Europe and Others Group regional bloc.

Called for the imposition of sanctions on those companies supplying Iran's missile program.

Congratulated the people of Israel on its 50th anniversary and reaffirmed the bonds of friendship between our two nations.

Marked the 30th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem and reaffirmed Congressional support for its unity.

Supported a resolution calling upon governments and authorities in the Middle East to act to resolve cases of Israeli soldiers currently missing in action.

Requested that the Secretary of State call for an immediate United Nations emergency session to condemn the July 30, 1997, bombings in Jerusalem

Cosponsored legislation to extend the Iran - Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 (ILSA) for a second five-year period. ILSA was signed into law after Congress voted overwhelmingly to enact the bill. ILSA was designed to deter foreign investment in Iran's energy sector in response to Iran's weapons-of-mass-destruction programs and its support of Islamic terrorist organizations. In Iran, we are confronted with a regime which continues to threaten the national security of the United States and the destruction of our Middle East allies. The Libyan government has failed to take responsibility for its actions in a terrorist attack in bringing down Pan Am Flight 103, killing over 250 Americans, and others. ILSA will enable our Nation to continue our efforts to pressure Iran and Libya to conform to acceptable standards of behavior within the international community.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Since the end of the Cold War, there have been attempts to limit nuclear arsenals in countries that already have them and prevent countries that do not yet have nuclear capability from developing it. Rep. Slaughter has supported measures to limit the spread of nuclear weapons.

Opposed continued development of a National Missile Defense system. While the President Bush has stopped short of announcing that the United States would abrogate the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty with Russia, he has indicated that he would move beyond the treaty's constraints in developing the national missile defense system. Rep. Slaughter has grave reservations over the development of a national missile defense system. At a time when our nation is working hard to promote disarmament around the globe, this system would send an inconsistent message to the rest of this world regarding our nation's nuclear weapons policy.

Urged the U.S. government to withhold proportional assistance to the International Atomic Energy Agency for its programs and projects in Iran which conflict with U.S. nuclear non-proliferation and safety goals.

Called on the Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Appealed to both Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee expressing condemnation of their decisions to conduct nuclear tests and urging their respective governments to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and to refrain from developing or deploying nuclear weapons.

Russia

With the end of the Cold War, relations with Russia have actually become more complex. Our former enemy is now developing democratic institutions to guide it. At the same time, certain actions taken by the Russian government cause concern for the U.S. security interests. Nuclear arsenals in Russia have not been reduced to the level the U.S. would like,

and at times the security of the stockpiles has not been assured. Russia continues to have strained relations with some of the countries on its borders, many of which were former states of the Soviet Union. Representative Slaughter shares the concerns about the prospect that Russia could still pose a threat to its neighbors, as well as the potential for the sale of nuclear material and technology to developing nations, especially rogue states.

Appealed to former Russian President Boris Yeltsin expressing outrage at the disturbing trend in Russian politics targeting Jewish citizens for Russia's economic problems.

Supported numerous actions directed at bringing about the release of Russian Navy Captain Alexander Nikitin, accused of treason and jailed for compiling already public information about unprotected nuclear waste in Russia.

Called on former Russian President Yeltsin to not to allow alterations to the Law on Freedom of Conscience, as it could hinder freedom of religion in that nation.

Urged Russia to stop governmental and non-governmental entities from providing missile technology to Iran; if their response is inadequate, to impose sanctions on those breaking non-proliferation standards; and to urge European allies to stop proliferation.

Ukraine

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Empire, Ukraine has emerged as one of the most important countries to the U.S. in Eastern Europe. Ten years after its independence, Ukraine now stands at an important crossroads in its development to a fully democratic society. Recent political events in Ukraine have been cause of serious concern on the part of Ukraine's staunchest supporters. Rep. Slaughter recognizes Ukraine's efforts to form relationships with the broader world community, including the United States and members of the European Union. At the same time, she is aware of the many challenges that currently confront Ukraine.

As a Co-Chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, Rep. Slaughter has been following political events in Ukraine closely that have been cause of serious concern on the part of Ukraine's staunchest supporters. The ouster of Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko and his government, and ongoing political turmoil sparked by tape recordings implicating the involvement of President Leonid Kuchma and other officials in the case of murdered journalist Heorhiy Gongadze have caused growing concerns. Meanwhile, widespread government corruption and falsification of election results have also raised concerns about the Ukrainian government's commitment to democratic ideals.

Supported an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2002 House Foreign Operations Appropriations bill to require that no less than \$125 million of the bill's funds be provided to Ukraine. The bill caps funding to Ukraine at \$125 million, 90 percent of which goes to humanitarian aid and non-governmental assistance programs.

Expressed concern about the political instability and reports of government harassment of the media in Ukraine in meetings with U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Carlos Pascual, and senior delegation from Ukraine led by Volodymyr Lytvyn, Special Envoy and Chief of Staff for President Kuchma.

Cosponsored a resolution urging the President of Ukraine to support democratic ideals, the right of free speech, and free assembly for Ukraine citizens.

Worked to ensure that the special problems Ukraine shoulders, such as the nuclear plant at Chernobyl, are addressed, and that the U.S. government assist the Ukrainian government with Ukraine's development.

Supported a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the 65th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33 should serve as a reminder of the brutality of the government of the former Soviet Union's repressive policies toward the Ukrainian people.

Urged the U.S. government to continue funding the Hepatitis B eradication program in the Ukraine, despite possible plans to withhold foreign aid for other reasons.

The United Nations

Over the past fifty years, the UN has proven itself to be an enduring presence as a forum for international peace and cooperation. While it has not always lived up to the lofty goals its founders set out for it, whenever crises arise in the world, leaders, including American leaders, frequently turn to the UN for assistance. Representative Slaughter has supported U.S. involvement in the UN and responsibility for the maintenance of the organization we worked so hard to help found out of the destruction of World War II.

Requested that the President work with the United Nations to establish an international criminal court with jurisdiction over serious international crimes, including war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity; and provide any assistance necessary to expedite the establishment of such a court.

Support full funding of the President's request for the United Nations Development Program emphasizing its impact on New York jobs and the bringing attention to the possibility of the UNDP moving to Germany without strong U.S. support.

Voted in favor of full payment of UN assessments on time, including repayment of arrears.

